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A N

A P O L O G Y

W. Webb
For the Conduct of a late celebrated second-rate MINISTER, from the Year 1729, at which Time he commenc'd *Courtier*, till within a few Weeks of his Death, in 1746.

Giving a clear View of his real *Principles* and *Design*, and containing many curious and interesting Particulars, relative to the Times and to *Persons* in the highest Stations.

Written by himself and found among his Papers.

Trabit sua quemque voluptas.

L O N D O N:

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(Price One-Shilling.)

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(A31)

APOLGY



commented Coward all within
a few Weeks of the Death
PR E F A C E.

those who have been
many years acquainted with
the late Mr. W. W. W. W. W.
only perceive him to have
been the Author of the fol-
lowing Apology; every line
of it testifies his stamp, as
to be a false all those who
had any knowledge of his
Explosion
(Price One Shilling)



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37



P R E F A C E.

THOSE who have been best acquainted with the late Mr. *W—n*, will readily perceive him to have been the Author of the following Apology; every Line of it so far wears his Stamp, as to be a Proof to all those who had any Knowledge of his Expression

Expressiion and way of Think-
 ing. We assure the Reader
 that it is here, as intire as it
 came to our Hand, excepting
 one Paragraph, relating to the
 late Rebellion, which we chuse
 to omit, and a few Words,
 which we judged proper to leave
 in Blank, or express by initial
 Letters. The Reader will
 himself, easily supply the
 Omissions, and soon guess the
 Reasons, and applaud the
 Caution.

It appears very obviously in
 the Face of the Work, that it

was not to have seen the Light while the Author lived, or until some signal Change should happen; and it would seem by some Passages, that it had not been finished long before his Death, particularly towards the Close of the Work, where the Author speaks of Justice, to the Memory of Sir *R. Walpole*, and where a certain living Nobleman, is very advantageously mentioned, *as accepting of Power distant from Court, &c.* But be that as it will, we presume not to say how far that
 great

great Man, and others may think themselves obliged to the Writer for his Opinion of their Views and Principles.

We take the Hint of our Title from the Author's Manuscript, where we found these Words, *an Apology for my Conduct in Parliament*, and the Motto intire as we affix it. Thus much we thought necessary, and more, we think would be needless.

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APOLOGY, &c.

THOUGH I was ever an Enemy to the innate, assuming Vanity of a neighbouring Nation, which had occasioned that Inundation of *Memoirs*, of which the World has complained in these latter Days; yet am of Opinion that there may be, at all Times, Men who might be said to be obliged to bring the Public acquainted with the Secrets of their Conduct, which, to do it impartially, can be performed but by themselves alone.

If it be difficult for a Man to acquire any tolerable Share of Knowledge of himself, how much more so is it for another, who must be less acquainted not only with his Mind, but Actions? Deceit and Hypocrisy are so woven into the Nature of Man, or at least into his Practice, that there is no forming any Judgment of him, but by his

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Works; and even these are often found insufficient. How often is a Man obliged to act seemingly against his Judgment and Principles, in order to arrive at some Point, however distant, which he may propose to himself at his first setting out in the World? And it is when Men are thus necessitated to vary from themselves, that they are most obliged to account with the Public for their Conduct, especially if they have been in any degree conspicuous, either by their Talents or Employments.

If then one be pardonable at any time, for presuming to thrust himself upon the Public for a Man of Importance, it surely must be when it becomes necessary for him to justify himself, in regard to his Conduct in a Sphere of Life so eminent, as to create him the Jealousies of both his new and old Associates. On such an Occasion, it becomes not only congruous, but incumbent upon a Man, to lay himself forth naked and undisguised, that if he cannot secure the good Opinion of some Set of Men while living, he may not at least have his Memory equally odious to all Parties when dead. For how indifferent soever, some Men may seem, in regard to Praise and Censure, the most profligate, if he examines himself nearly, must perceive an Inclination to merit the first, and avoid the latter.

For my own part, as inattentive as I may have seemed, to deserving Applause or securing

ring the good Opinion, either of those I left, or them I came to, I do confess, that the most pungent Concern I felt all along, was the being obliged, by the Plan I laid down to myself, to act so as to forfeit the Regard of my old Friends, without really gaining either the Confidence or good Opinion of those I was come over to.

It is true, that I had at different times, obliquely opened myself to some few serious Men of the Party I had seemingly abandoned. But were they bound to believe me? rather were they not bound to disbelieve one, whose Practice was so steadily repugnant to his secret Professions? and as for the new Party I adhered too, I own I was quite indifferent what they thought of me, after I had been initiated into the Mysteries of their System, which roll'd chiefly on securing Power and Profit.

These, I admit, are powerful Motives, and such as few are able to resist. Yet I may say with Truth, that neither had Weight with me; or rather let me say, that they had not the only Weight with me, in my forming the Resolution of leaving the Party I was bred with, and supporting the Measures of my new Associates.

I won't deny my having a Propensity to Power, much less ought, or can I say, that

I had not a Desire of accumulating Wealth. On the Contrary, my Appetite for both was keen and restless, particularly for the latter. But I may say, or at least I always thought I might, that my Desire of rescuing my Country from Ruin was still more prevalent in my Breast, than the Love of either Power or Riches.

Yet how sincere soever this Avowal be, or that I think is to be, I am sensible to have given a sufficient room, for creating a Suspicion of its Veracity. I was by nature parcimonious, but not covetous, tho' I own, the Line between my Avarice and Parcimony might have been easily mistaken, by even those who had most Opportunity of knowing me the best. Conscious then, that my Practice was such, till lately, as might justify a Supposition, that a Thirst for Riches was my predominant Passion, I must expect to meet with but few, if any, who will be persuaded that Avarice has had a less Share than Patriotism in my Conduct, since I first went into the Measures of the Court.

And tho' after a Struggle which cost me much Pains, I lately got the better of that *Appetite*, which was thought to be most prevalent, yet am I not therefore intitled to hope, that the Public will have forgot, or overlook'd the longest Period of my Life and Practice.

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Let me then set my Heart at rest, with regard to my Cotemporaries of our different Parties. I wish I could say of them, as I can with strict Truth of myself, that I acted upon a Plan, which seemed to me the most eligible for securing the Liberty, and retrieving the Honour and Trade of my Country.

Probably I shall not meet with that Credit which my Heart tells me I merit, yet to exonerate my Conscience, I will speak Truth and the whole Truth, as far as I can recollect, tho' it be at the Expence of that Character, which I may be supposed endeavouring to establish, if not with the present, at least with future Generations,

A Character founded on Deception may be truly said to rest on a defective Foundation; and yet it is possible such a one may be essentially amiable and virtuous, tho' visibly attended with all the Concomitants of a defective Reputation. Let me be indulged to reckon mine of this Complection; but whether it be or not, I shall not the less flatter myself to have done my Duty, not only in wearing the Mask in order to serve my—Prince and Country, but in dropping it when all Fallacy should subside to make way for Truth and Candour.

There are Seasons for Deceit and Imposition, Times when it may be meritorious to deceive

deceive and impose. But there are Seasons likewise, wherein Diffimulation is not only base and ungenerous, but impolitic. And surely if ever it be imprudent, that is impolitic to dissemble, 'tis when one can have no view to be a Gainer by the Diffimulation.

This happens, or I grossly deceive myself, to be my Case at present: I desire not the World to be undeceived while I exist in it, and therefore cannot be deemed self-interested, for having in the present manner taken the Pains to unveil myself. But it may be said, that Self-Interest is not relative to the present only, but to futurity likewise: granted; yet I will venture saying, that Self-Interest in this latter Sense, is by no means criminal, whereas it certainly is in the former.

In regard to Futurity, Self-Interest should loose its Name. What Interest can a Man propose, to be thought an honest Man a hundred Years hence? He may indeed, propose a future Reward for being intentionally honest, but can have none in view, in the exposing that Intention to Posterity, from whom there can be no Expectation, except that of Fame, which is too vague and frothy for a rational Being to seek with Earnestness.

Thus then with no View to Interest, except that which impels a virtuous Mind, to
render

render Justice where it seems due, I have taken the Resolution of producing myself just as I am, or such at least as I appear to myself, leaving each at liberty to judge of my Conduct in public Life, as he pleases, and of my Value or Humility in discovering the real Motives of that Conduct.

Being descended from a Stock distinguished for Loyalty and Patriotism, I thought it my Duty on my first setting out in the World, to tread in the Steps of a Family that had acquired so high a Reputation for public Virtue. Therefore, on all Occasions, I was willing my Acquaintance should see that I had not degenerated.

But tho' I thus emulated in Public the Virtues of my immediate Predecessor, I studiously employed myself in Private, to examining the Rectitude of his Principles, being ever of Opinion, that a rational Being ought not to take up with Principles, either Religious or Political, but such as squared with his Reason and Conscience.

I may be laughed at, for using the words Conscience and Religion; nor shall I wonder at it, since I myself had publickly contributed as much as most Men to propagate Venality and Irreligion. But let me, however, urge in my own Defence, that the Propagation from Vice' as not so much my Inclination,

tion, as it was a Branch of that Scheme by which I resolv'd to shape my Conduct, the better to avert the impending Ruin of my Country.

My Country and———Prince, was ever in my View and uppermost in my Thoughts, even in my tender Age; for so was I tutor'd to think, before I was capable of Reflection. Yet this Prejudice, strong as it might have been, was not of Force enough to prevent my examining the Depth and Justice of the Principles, that had been inculcated so early, and so carefully.

The first step I took in this so necessary a Research, was to examine the Motives, the Justice, the Necessity and Expediency of the Revolution, a Measure that had occasioned so mighty a Chasm in the Constitution. I consulted the best Authorities, both Living and Written, concerning that important Change, which happened before my time, reckoning that from such only, Judgment might be best formed of the Worth of those Principles, adopted by the two different contending Parties in the Nation.

I could evidently gather from Books and Men of all Parties, that those who had the earliest and principal Share in the Conduct of that mighty Affair, had no view to such a Change as happened, nor intended to go such Lengths,

as they were led into afterwards. Here I paused a while, to see if I might not rest where so many great Men had taken their stand, even while the Scene was yet fresh and unclosed. And I freely confess to have thought this so early a Struggle, in favour of the *old Constitution*, to be a tacit Disapprobation of the new Measure, and a Dishonour to those, who had shamefully yielded to the Allurements of present Favour and Power, after they had shined on the other side of the Question.

Such were my earliest Sentiments in regard to that great novel Measure, while I was as yet a younger Brother, and before there were any Thoughts by my Friends, of introducing me to the Family abroad, on which the Crown was settled. Nor could I afterwards see any reason for altering those early Sentiments, which strengthened with my Years, and became at last the Basis, on which I built that System which I now think myself obliged to avow and explain.

My own natural Inquisitiveness, might have led me to the Examination of an Event, that had occasioned so infinite a Change in the Constitution; but if I had not been so inclined, it would have been scarce possible for me to avoid it, seeing I was surrounded by Relations, both by Father and Mother, and by their Dependants, that took Pains to display it in its native Colours.

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But

But among all my Relations, none had my Attention so much as my Uncle *Oxford*, who had projected my being put into the Service of the expectant Family. This great Man, who will appear truly Great in the Annals of his Country, if his Portrait be drawn impartially, was at once my Monitor and the Original I proposed to copy after. He took a particular Delight, not only to sound, but prune and cultivate my Understanding. But as his Avocations were great and many, he could spare but few Moments to mould a Mind, of which he was often pleased to say, he had no mean Opinion.

After I returned from *H—r*, he was more at leisure, till the mistaken Politicks of the new Ministry had framed an Accusation against him, which, tho' they themselves knew to be vague and frivolous, cost him many Months Confinement, and much Vexation. But before and after his Confinement, he took Care to confirm me in those Principles, which I had adopted in my greenest Years, much more by Choice than Chance.

The Method he took, was to set before me the Nature and Excellence of the Constitution, as it stood before the great Event under present Consideration. He would often compare the present with the former State of the Nation, and such always were his Descriptions,

Descriptions, as gave this the Preference of that; but, if in those early Days, after the Accession, he found Reason for speaking more advantageously of former than latter Times, what would he have said, if he had lived in these Days of ours, when the Amount of our Taxes, annually, almost equals the Quantum of our Specie, and the Interest of our Debts exceeds the old Revenue, and when Venality and Infidelity are not only generally practiced, but publickly avowed.

How hard was the Fate of that noble Patriot, who merited the glorious Epithet in its amplest Sense? while a Commoner, who struggled more to prevent a further Intrusion on the Constitution, and when dignified with the Peerage, who so boldly and openly went about to recover it? But in the latter Days of his Influence, he had Difficulties to surmount which few chief Ministers before him ever had. He had a weak, an irresolute and diffident Female Genius to manage on one Hand, and a restless, ambitious, self-sufficient Coadjutor, whom he durst not trust, believing he was unsound at bottom, to deal with on the other. It was his peculiar hard Fortune, that he could not with Safety, trust even his royal Mistress with all the Secrets of his Plan, for answering her own principal Purpose; much less could he venture discovering himself to those whom she had appointed his Fellow-Labourers in the hazardous Work.

In such Circumstances what was to be done; how must he have behaved? why just as he did, trimming between all Parties, in hopes some favourable Interval, some lucky Incident might happen, to remove the Impediments in his Way to the Completion of his Scheme. He hoped to see the Rancour of the Whigs abate on one Hand, and the Spirit of true Toryism rise on the other. There was, it is true, a Tory Spirit in the Nation, which by his means, was greatly widened and spread, but it was not rose up to that Pitch, particularly among the better Sort, which he wished for. The common People were hearty, and meant well; but the Toryism of the Gentry went little farther than moderate Whiggism.

No wonder, in such a Situation, that that great Man was unable to execute the Scheme he had digested with so great Caution and Accuracy. He wanted not Resolution to hazard making the last bold Struggle; for his Courage, either personal or political, was never questioned; but his Penetration would not permit him to undertake, avowedly, the Relief of his Country without any hopes of Success, well knowing that all such unsuccessful Struggles would but add to the Power that oppressed her.

Never were the Intentions of a leading Minister more mysterious, and consequently less

less known, than my Lord *Oxford's*. There were but very few in his Secrets, and those he chose so well, that he had no reason to repine at his Choice. They could justify his Conduct, were it safe or prudent while he was living; and those of them that had out-lived him, had very prudential Reasons, after his Death, for not attempting to bring the Public acquainted with his real Character.

So little was that great mangled Character understood, that I myself have heard it doubted, whether ever he really intended to answer the main Purpose of his Royal Mistress, notwithstanding that all his Influence was derived from that Source; nay, I have heard very great Men say, that he was the only Person that had impeded the Completion of her Wishes, and broke her Heart. But alas! how fallible are the Conjectures of the Public, in regard to Statesmen of any Depth or Caution? Even Ministers but of very moderate Capacities are but little known to the Public; and if so, how cautious ought a Man to be, in the passing Judgment on those famed for Wisdom and Address?

I believe few, if any, would believe a Man that should assert he knew, that *Walpole* and *Harley* had similar Intentions, and were working to the same End, tho' by means as different as their Professions. Yet nothing is more

more certain, than that the first *Robert* was steady in the Interest of his Prince; nor yet more so, than that the latter *Robert* was as earnest in the same Interest. I speak from an Experience, in which I could not have been mistaken. One was my Uncle, and consequently was open and unreserved to me; nor was the other less so, tho' tied by Bands of Friendship only; but they were Bands springing from similar secret Intentions and Principles of Doyalty.

But can we wonder that a *Harley* and a *Walpole*, so descended as they were, should have Views to the old Constitution, when a *Spencer* while he was in Power, and the Son of that very *Spencer*, who was principally instrumental in the Alteration, was known to have projected such a Change as they did? Had the late Earl of *S—d—d* lived but a single Year longer, I don't think but he would have pushed openly at the Execution of his Scheme; and it is scarce to be doubted that he must have succeeded. But indeed he had adroitly opened himself a Channel, which neither of the others had the Opportunity of doing.

My Lord *S—d—d* found a Stranger on the Throne, who had no liking to the Nation, and less perhaps to the *H—r ap—t*. An Abdication by such a Prince would be no such great matter of Admiration, nor would the Renewal of the Constitution, during the Influence

fluence of a Minister acting under a Prince, so indifferent about the Possession, be a matter of much Difficulty or Hazard.

The Danger was thought, by the late Q—, to be so imminent, that she artfully projected a counter Scheme, which must have defeated the late K— and his Minister's Project, if it could have been executed. The then Empress was the Engine, by which the Princess of W—s hoped to bring the Court of Rome to an Opinion that it would be the Interest of the Competitor, to cede his Pretensions for a Sum of Money. Could such a Cession be obtained, the H—r a—t might then stand upon his own bottom, in Opposition to his Father, should he suffer himself to be inveigled by his Minister.

But this Scheme being discovered to the Minister, by a secret Interception of the Correspondence between the Princesses, the Case of the H—r a—t became more desperate, as the Minister now found himself obliged to precipitate the Execution of his Scheme. But cross Accidents intervening for a while, and Lord S—d—d's death afterwards, the Project drop'd for that time, but not without Suspicion, that it would be taken again as soon as the Prince could find a Minister, on whose Truth and Principles he could rely.

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As I think it incumbent upon me to account to the Public for my ministerial Conduct, I don't look upon myself to be at Liberty to suppress any of my Actions in my Capacity of a Courtier, however inconsistent with the formal strict Rules of Honour. The Correspondence between the late Q—n and the Empress being suspected by my Uncle, it was resolved that I, who was charged with carrying my Mistress's Letters to the Post, should open and take Copies of them. But such Copies and one Original, detain'd as a Proof, being laid before Lord S—d—d and the late K—, it may be easily judged how the Diffention in the R—l F——y was widened.

Such were my Lord *Oxford's* Views in detecting the P——'s Correspondence, and such were mine, in strictly observing his Directions. The public Good being the common Object in View, neither of us could be justly blamed, for having made every other Consideration subservient to that one of restoring the Constitution: and when a Man thinks such a Restoration of absolute Necessity, he may be easily pardoned any Slips he may have made, in point of nice Formality, especially where he thinks the Happiness and Freedom of his Country to be concerned.

It is no less extraordinary than worthy the Notice of true *Englishmen*, that most if
not

not all the chief Ministers, since the Revolution, have had their Eye on the *old Constitution*, no less than the first great Revolutioners, who as I said before, never intended to journey as far as the Urgency of the Times obliged them. I am well satisfied, that Lord *Godolphin* and the great Duke of *M—b*, wished as warmly to the *old Constitution*, as my Uncle *Harley*, and had wrought as arduously on their Plan, for its Restoration, as he did on his, or as I have on mine.

But that which is less known tho' not less certain, is, that the late Earl *S—b—e* had his Scheme for retrieving the Mistakes of the last Century, as well as both the preceeding and succeeding Ministers. His Plan indeed, was singular, but was not the less apt and feazable for being so. He would have had so much Power thrown into the Hands of the Prince, that he must be an Angel if he did not misuse it, by which means, he proposed a Republic should rise on the Ruins of Monarchy.

It is well known, that that Nobleman professed republican Principles; nor is it doubted he would have gone as far, perhaps farther than any Man of his Country, towards maintaining those Professions. But it is indisputable also, that he encouraged that Opinion, and seemingly adopted it himself, as Roman Catholicks do Infidelity, the better to introduce their own Faith, upon the Ruins

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of the Reformation, which permits unbounded religious Freedom. Had he lived to have raised a Commonwealth on the Destruction of kingly Government, by granting the Prince more Power than the Constitution warranted, he could not fail re-establishing the ancient Government in the Confusion of the Popular, to which the *English* are by no means fitted by Nature.

Except Lord *B——ke*, whose Vanity or bad Heart obstructed the Treasurer's Scheme, and whose Conduct afterwards in *France*, rendered his Integrity questionable at least; I say, excepting him, sure I am, there had not been a single *English* Minister of Sense and Influence, (and some I have known with the latter without the former) since the Revolution, that had not a constant View to the Recovery of the Constitution. There were some few Foreigners indeed during that Period, such as *Bentinck*, *Berensdorf* and *Bothmar*, that may have had other Views. But such Exoticks ought to be out of the Question with *Englishmen*, whose Wisdom should always lead them to the Maintainance of that Constitution transmitted down with their Freedom, by their Ancestors.

Tho' each of those great Men took different Roads, they all pointed to the same Goal. Each shaped his Conduct, as the Circumstance of Seasons and Party, permitted:

I won't deny, however, that they may have had an Eye to their own immediate Interest, while they were scheming for the Community; but if they blended that of Posterity with their own, they were excusable: And that they did so, I am convinced, because I have seen such Proofs as ought to convince.

But of all their Plans, Lord Oxford's was the simplest, and consequently soonest and easiest executed. Nay, it would almost have executed itself, if he had not the Fickleness of his royal Mistress, and the Rottenness of St. J——n and H——t, to obstruct his Career; but his Plan would not do since the Accession; and I often heard him say so, adding, that if he were to serve the new Rulers, he would work upon a *Consumptive* Plan, his Term for tiring out the Nation, with Debts, Taxes, co-ersive Laws and Clogs upon Trade and Industry, so as that they would of themselves do their own best Work.

The second Robert, with slower Faculties and less Resolution, seems to have adopted a Plan of this last Complection, but whether it was an Original with him, or he took it up at second Hand, from that saying of Lord Oxford's, I cannot say; only I should think it was not his own, because he certainly was slow of Invention, and of a very circumscribed Genius.

I have been astonished to think how Mr. W with such moderate Talents, a narrow Fortune, and very few or no Relations of Figure or Interest, had been able to push himself to the Summit of Power. The supporting himself there so long as he did, may be easily accounted for, by those who know how excessively lavish he was of the public Money, to his Creatures and Dependents. But that Waste of the Revenue would have been necessary, on his Plan, if he had not had the Maintainance of his own Power in View. For as has been already observed, that Minister's Scheme was to drain away the Riches of the Nation, and waste and enervate their Strength, so as that in length of Time, they would come of themselves, to a Sense of their Condition, and be ready to exchange it for a better.

Another Branch of his Scheme, was to corrupt the Morals of the People generally, in order to create an Indifference in them, towards Religion and Posterity. A Disregard for the latter would plunge them naturally into Profusion and Luxury, which would necessarily hurry on Poverty and Despair; and a Disrelish for religious Worship in general would render them less anxious and averse to those religious Tenets, that had given the best Colour for the late Change in the Constitution.

I was willing to think, even before I came into Parliament, which was on the Accession of the reigning Prince, that Sir Robert had a View to Lord Oxford's debilitating Plan; and on this Supposition, which I communicated to some of my Friends, I would have joined him the first Day, if I had not weakly suffered myself to be persuaded against my own private Opinion. Our People could not be reasoned out of that old Track, which they had travelled in from the Revolution. They thought it meritorious to oppose and clog the Measures of the Court, whereas, on the System I laid down to myself, to abet and indulge the Court, was the sure, tho' slow Means, of reducing the People to that low Condition, which often renders a Nation wise and desperate.

It is in Politicks as in Religion; the latter generally thrives by Persecution, and so do Courts and Ministers by Opposition. Therefore, instead of joining in the strong and violent Opposition to the Minister, on my coming into Parliament, I ought and would have enlisted with him, if I had not weakly submitted to others, who tho' of the same Principles, acted on different Plans. But after a fruitless Contention of two Years, with my Party to bring them to a Relish of my Scheme, I quitted them intirely, and resigned myself implicitly, to be the Creature of the Court.

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The Figure I made in the Opposition, while I acted by foreign Lights, gave me such additional Reputation with my Party, that my Desertion, as they termed it, was thought to have given the deepest wound to the Cause, that it could have received. Such was the Language of those I left; and the Acquisition which the Minister had made was looked upon to be of no small Importance by the ministerial Party. Thus might one, more vain than I, have been tempted to think himself of no little Consequence; and plumed himself, on being so highly reputed by one Party, and so highly acceptable to the other. But to speak sincerely, I left my Party to promote that Cause and Interest, that they had at Heart, and went over to the Court, to give the better Countenance to the ruinous Measures then in Hand.

The first Debate of Moment, I appeared in, in my new Sphere, was concerning the Treaty of *Seville*, which, as it was a Measure necessarily productive of Brangles and Expence, was intirely consistent with my Plan. And it was on this Occasion, that I was first able to form a certain Judgment of the Minister's real Intentions. I fancied indeed all along, that he must have been of my own way of thinking, believing he was by Choice and Nature a Friend to Monarchy, and that he could not but see that the whole Scope of

his

his Administration tended in the main, to the Disservice of his present M—r, and his Family. But until now, I cannot say, that I could judge of him with certainty.

The Occasion was this; the Day after that first grand Debate, in which I was thought to have made some Figure, Sir Robert was pleased to select me for his Evening Companion. After he had passed me large Compliments on the Glory, as he phrased it, I had acquired the Day before, he asked me with an Air of great Seriousness, what were my private Sentiments of a Measure, I had so well defended in Public? As I believed the Question to have been put purposely, to furnish an Opportunity for an Eclaircissement on both Sides, I made no hesitation to avow my Disapprobation of it, as being pregnant with future Squabbles and Dissentions. ‘I am mistaken,’ said he, smiling, or you would not have been so very eloquent, in Praise of the Treaty, if you had thought it conducive to the real Interest of the present Family?—I replied immediately, that the Welfare of the Community being the first and chief Object of my Attention, I tried every Measure by that Touch-Stone, and that as I looked on the Treaty in question, to be in its Consequences, a Measure destructive of that Welfare, I tacitly disapproved of it without considering how much or how little the Interest of the Family was concerned. And I added, that
however

however the nature of his Employ might oblige him to Submission, I did not doubt but he had, as myself, the public Good ever and chiefly in view.

Here the Knight took me by my Hand, saying, ' Mr. W——n, you are more deeply
' discerning for your Years than any of our
' Modern Youth, and I am pleased I was not
' mistaken in my Opinion of your secret
' Motive for leaving your Prty, and coming
' over to us, without being sought so earnest-
' ly after, as you might justly have expected,
' You perceived, I suppose, or thought you
' did, the Tendency of my Conduct, and ima-
' gined a Similitude, which inclined you to
' co-operate with me in the favourite Under-
' taking. You are not mistaken, continued
' he, in your Opinion of my private Senti-
' ments, nor in your Conjectures of the true
' Motive of my Conduct. I may not live or
' continue in Power long enough to perfect
' my Scheme; but am sure to lay such a
' Foundation, as my Successor may build
' upon with certainty, and compleat the Work.
' 'Tis probable, said he, you will be that
' Finisher; and I sincerely wish you may for
' the public Good. For should P——y or
' C——t, from the Effects of the present
' Opposition, succeed to my Influence, I
' cannot answer they will pursue my Plan.
' And as for P——m, the likeliest man
' next yourself, if the Opposition prevails
not,

not, whatever his private Sentiments concerning the *old Constitution* be, for I never had confidence enough in him, to trust him with mine, he has not Parts equal to so arduous an Undertaking; and therefore I should suspect the glorious Work would miscarry in his Hands, even tho' his Brother should co-operate with him; who, by the Bye, has a better Understanding, tho' more confused and he be less laborious. I cannot say what the D——'s Discernment, (and let me say that his Judgment is more solid, when he affords himself leisure for serious Reflection, than is commonly imagined) and Love of his Country may prompt him to transact in Favour of the *old Constitution*, but am well assured he was neither bred nor born, as you and I were, with Sentiments in its Favour. As for P——y, his Thirst for Wealth occupies his Mind too much to leave room for other Considerations, especially if attended with Risque and Danger. He dreads too much the Consequence of public Confusion, to join in the Recovery of the *old Constitution*, tho' the Solidity of his Understanding might inform him the Attempt would be eligible.

If ever C——t should be vested with Power, he will take a direct contrary Path to the desirable Goal, than you and I would chuse. And as mean an Opinion as I have of the Man's Virtue, I believe he

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thinks and wishes as we do, therefore would be sorry he ever should ingross the royal E—air, because his Plan, which from the Restlessness and Arrogance of his Disposition, I reckon would be built on War and Confusion, could not fail of producing such Effects, as would add to the Power of the C——n, which must necessarily obstruct the Completion of the general Scheme.

After this Discovery of his private Sentiments, the Minister fell into the Consideration of the Difficulty of supporting himself, where there were two distinct Interests to be pursued, and he was not at Liberty to cherish the Natural as much as he was inclined, nor to loose Sight of the Foreign, as often as the latter seemed incompatible with the first. On this Occasion he instanced the Treaty of *Hanover* in 1725, which he said was partly the Product of that hot blundering Statesman's Brain, his Brother-in-Law, of whom he was obliged to get rid, because he constantly perplexed his Scheme, tho' he believed, without Design, as not being in his Secrets.

I own I could not see why Sir Robert should object to this Treaty, any more than to that of *Seville*; for on his general Plan, which was to drain, perplex and weaken his Country, the Alliance of *Hanover*, was superlatively well calculated. But I am to suppose, that that Treaty, which may be deemed

ed a Measure intirely Electoral, had rendered him too dependant on *France* and the *Hanoverian* Ministers. In this Light indeed, the Treaty might not be relished by the Minister, or otherwise it had the Appearance of answering his Purpose, as no Measure could in its Nature, be more productive of Perplexity and Expence.

Another Reason likewise, might be assigned for Sir *Robert's* secret Disapprobation of the Treaty, which was, that it furnished his Opponents, with too strong and specious Arguments against his Administration. And herein he shewed his Sagacity, it being certain that the Treaty of *Hanover*, tho' made in 1725, had occasioned his Fall in 1741. For tho' it be true there were many other intervening Circumstances that concurred, he himself was steadily of Opinion that the Blunder of Lord *T—b—n*, as he always called that Treaty, was the mediate Foundation of the Triumph of his Enemies.

On Sir *Robert's* Plan and mine such a Treaty might have been singularly expedient, as it necessarily opened the *Sluice* of Expence, estranged from us, and weakened our natural Ally, the late Emperor, *Charles VI.* and strengthened the Hands of our hereditary Enemies, the *French*. But on the other Hand, as it might tend hereafter, to enlarge the Power of the present royal Family, in the Empire, and therefore might prove an

Impediment to the Perfection of the projected Scheme, I was always sorry whenever the Necessities of the Administration obliged me to justify it.

This was my Opinion during Sir Robert's Administration, but have altered it since, on perceiving that all Attempts for enlarging the Electoral Power in Germany have constantly had a direct contrary effect. The Jealousy of the German Princes, particularly of his P—n Majesty, has all along increased, in Proportion to the Influence, which this Crown was supposed to have given to the Electorate in the Empire. Is it not perceivable, ever since the breaking out of the present Troubles on the Continent, that all our Measures for the Support of the House of Austria, were either directly opposed, or indirectly clogged by the other Powers of the Empire, upon no other Principle but that of Independency? An increase of the Power of the House of Austria has been no less dreaded, than an Addition to that of the House of H—r. Nor do I think the Prussian Jealousy of the House of Austria, on Account of Silesia, to exceed that of the House of H—r, on Account of the Diadem of these Kingdoms.

The King of Prussia would naturally, I may say necessarily, be at the Head of the Protestant Interest in Germany, if this Crown did

did not add so much greater Lustre and Weight to the Electorate of *H---*, than may be consistent with the Views of its Neighbours. And I am not sure, but the Court of *Berlin* might bid fair for prescribing, even to the Catholics of the Empire, now the House of *Austria* is on the Decline, if the mighty Weight of this Crown, had been out of the Scale. For this Reason, is there the Shadow of Probability, that our present Struggles on the Continent, can be attended with Success? Could we push the *French*, even within their own Limits, by some lucky Event, which does not seem very probable, I make no doubt but *P---*, who sees *H---*, as well as *Austria* with jaundiced Eyes, would drop the Mask of Neutrality, and Arm openly in their Favour. Nor am I sure that his present *P---* Majesty would have any such Regard to the Safety of the *Dutch*, as might induce him to interfere in their Favour.

That Prince and that People have not been entirely well together, for some time, particularly since he has known the Views of our Court, to raise the Prince of *O---* to the Power of his Predecessors. And as every such additional Power would naturally increase the Jealousy of his *P---* Majesty in regard to *H---*, I am of Opinion if we could push up the House of *O---* to the Stadtholdership, we should by that very Measure, drive
that

that *Prillce* but the more unalterably into the Arms of *France*. In *Regard* to the Match with the Prince of *Orléans*, *Sir Robert* and I were of different Opinions; but except the late Convention with *Spain*, that was the only Instance of our disagreeing, as to the Modus of Perfecting our Scheme. He thought the Alliance of the House of *Orléans* would so strengthen the House of *Habsburgs*, that there could be no Chance hereafter, for a Completion of the Patriot Scheme; whereas I was stedfastly of Opinion that it would contribute to the Completion, by awaking the Jealousy, not only of *Prussia*, but of the *Dutch* and of *France* likewise, who since that Period, has redoubled her Efforts to lure the *Hollanders*, not only into a good Opinion of her Intentions, but to a Jealousy of the Views of our Court.

Tho' one would think that these Consequences might seem obvious to a Man of common Discernment, *Sir Robert* could not be brought to see them; but it must be admitted, that his Comprehension was limited. Yet I believe that the Nobleman, who had the chiefest Hand in the Match, might have had much such Views, as induced me to differ in Opinion with the Minister.

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As I was inclined to think well of this great Man, of high Merit, in Regard to the *old Constitution*, I endeavoured to reconcile the Minister to him, that by the Co-operation of so good a Man, and so shining a Genius, we might accelerate the Completion of the grand Scheme: But there was no persuading Sir Robert to associate with one of that Nobleman's Wit and Fire, tho' his Objections turned on Notions he had formed of that Lord's religious and political Principles. For however the Minister may have been obliged, to employ Men of known loose Principles, as to Church and State, to carry certain Points and please his Party and his Court, he abhorred the Thoughts of a Republic, and was a staunch Churchman. The Firmness of this last Principle, appeared evidently in his Speech, against repealing the Test-Act, in Favour of Dissenters, which Opposition, by the bye, contributed to cost him his Post and his Life. For had he kept his Word, with the Dissenters, 'tis probable he might not have lost the general Election, nor consequently his Power, the Loss of which broke his Heart.

But as for the great Man, whose Principles had been thus objected to by the Minister, I never knew any Reason for even suspecting he did not wish as warmly, as I myself did to the *old Constitution*. And as for his Religion, a Man may be a staunch Patriot, without thinking

thinking better of our spiritual Guides, than they deserve. How have they merited the Attention, or Approbation of Men of Sense and Candour? Churchmen, before my time, may have had some Title to the Esteem of the People; but since I had any Knowledge of Men, the Clergy have brought the C——h itself, into C——t. So that if my Lord —— should be weaned from his Veneration for the Church, as well as many others, let them who have been the primary Cause, take shame to themselves and bear the Blame.

I shall always esteem that great Man for his Virtues, tho' he should not see the Inside of a Church, during his Life; nor shall I think him less the Friend to the *true Constitution* of his Country, for being no Friend to venal, worldly Priests. I believe he opposed Sir Robert, not knowing his secret Intentions, or not supposing him so virtuous, as to intend any thing that should clash with his own immediate Interest or Influence. And if he continued opposing the succeeding Minister, it was not that he looked upon his Measures, as unapt for the Purpose of my salutary Scheme, but that he was afraid the pushing Servant might indulge his ——, in bringing an Army of cherished Foreigners home to us, that might overturn, instead of restoring the Constitution. As there are but few Things, the late Minister was not capable of doing,

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towards continuing his own Influence, if he had been at the Helm in the late unhappy Troubles, I should expect such an Army of *H——ns* in the Bowels of our Country, as might be much easier brought hither than sent away.

This distinguished Nobleman, has been lately taken into the Ministry, but it is in such a State of Subordination, as his high Spirit would never brook, if he had not such Patriot Views as I myself had, and still have, in taking a Share in the Conduct of public Affairs, for the Completion of my favourite Scheme. One Man in, is worth a Dozen out of Place, for the Purpose of pushing Things to Extremity, which alone is the Way to the *old Constitution*. And for this Reason, I have determined to preserve my Power, that is, to keep my Place, let who will ingross the Confidence of the Prince, or force himself upon him. This, it may be urged, is the true Characteristic of the old Vicar; it may be said to favour of Venality and Meanness of Spirit: And it would so, if the Intention was not pure and virtuous. Herein alone consists the Guilt or Innocence of a Man's Conduct. And as I may safely say that mine, all along, has been shaped to restore the Constitution, I consider as meritorious what the Public may unknowingly deem venal and corrupt.

In this Light I consider the truly great Man, lately come into the Ministry. Is it

not obvious that he must have some such Patriot View, in accepting of Power so distant from Court? Why else, but to pave his further Way for the glorious Purpose of serving his Country, *essentially*, has he laid such Restraint on his active Mind? Generous Motive! Nor do I despair in the least, but he will prove himself the unshaken Friend to the *old Constitution* I take him for, when he reaches that Summit of Power, which will enable him to take the Lead in the Administration. As all the great leading Men, since the Revolution, had been secret Friends to that *Sacred Standard*; as all the Wise and Virtuous since that Period, have been unwearied in their Attention to that single Point, why should we doubt the V—e R——ys Patriot Views, who so brightly Shines among his Cotemporaries?

Need we a stronger Proof of this persuasive Orator's Attention to the *old Constitution*, than the Share he had in bringing on the present War with *Spain*, which it was evident would bring on an open Breach with *France*. There is no disputing that a lucrative, safe and lasting Harmony with *Spain*, might have been founded on the Convention that had been so loudly opposed; and for this Reason I never associated, in the Defence of any of the Court Measures, with so great Reluctance, as in the Support of that Compact. It appeared to me as clear as Day, that a Rupture with

with *Spain*, would involve us in a long and onerous War with *France*, which, if it should not produce an immediate Recovery of the Constitution, would at least help on the Completion of the grand Scheme, of awaking the People, by an Increase of their Burden and Wants.

I considered Peace, however expensive Sir *Robert* contrived to render it, but as an Opiate which might in Length of Time, shatter and shake the Body Politic; but War, I was sure, would cause an instantaneous Convulsion, or so hasty a Consumption, as would rouse the supine Community. Our People are become so corrupt, and void of all Sense of Virtue and Justice, that unless they are made to bow to the Knee, by an Addition to their present Burden, they will not see the Pit in their Way, nor strive to avoid it. But a long, ill-managed, and probably an unsuccessful War, with the whole House of *Bourbon*, would infallibly bend them to that Attitude, to which they must come, before they are either wise or just.

As I was now without Reserve, in the Secret of the Minister's Attention to the *old Constitution*, I expatiated freely with him, on his Measures for preventing a Rupture with *Spain*. I told him he might thank Heaven, that the Opposition had so inflamed the People, as that they wantonly and imprudently

urged a War, which in its Consequence, might
 produce that *Change* he intended, much more
 certainly and, looner than he could propose
 by his Scheme of an expensive consuming
 Peace. I added that the more prosperous the
 War might be on our Side, the keener would
 be the Resentment of the *Bourbons*, and the
 more steady and resolved would be their
 Efforts, to create Confusion in the Bowels of
 our Country.——Here, Sir *Robert* interrupt-
 ed me, saying——‘but my friend, if we
 ‘should not be successful in the War, how
 ‘will it contribute to the Completion of our
 ‘Scheme? You seem to look but at the fair
 ‘Side of the Picture. I agree with you, that
 ‘Success on our Side would give an Edge
 ‘to the Resentment of the *Bourbons*, and be
 ‘the Means of their making uncommon Ef-
 ‘forts, to unhinge the present Form of our
 ‘Establishment. But should they be Success-
 ‘ful, will they, or ought they to wish or
 ‘promote the Alteration? Would not they
 ‘rather prevent it? Is it not their Interest,
 ‘that we continue and even increase our Debts
 ‘and Taxes? And can it be supposed they
 ‘would contribute towards meliorating our
 ‘Condition, and creating Union among our-
 ‘selves, unless they are forced by a Run of ill
 ‘Fortune? And for this Reason, tho’ I was
 ‘My Scheme, you know, added he, was
 ‘Peace, because from the Degeneracy of the
 ‘People, and Inability of our Commanders,
 ‘I apprehended we should be unsuccessful,
 ‘and

and was sure the House of *France*, would never concur to do your Work and Mine, while they could carry on their own with Success. Could we beat *France*, she would quicken her Pace to the other Side of the *Alps*, in order to help herself, but am convinced she never will journey thither, to help us, or for the Glory of doing a generous or compassionate Action. My Intimacy with the old Cardinal, has given me a thorough Knowledge of the Genius of the *French* Cabinet. I rather think that *France* would sooner impede, than promote the Completion of our Schemes; therefore have been always for such Measures as might compleat it, without the Concurrence of that delusive, self-interested Court.—

Tho' I had not a much better Opinion of our Statesmen or Generals than the Minister, nor a more favourable one of *France*, yet I was willing to try the Chance of War, believing it might more immediately answer my Purpose than Peace. Some lucky Incident, I thought, might happen during the War, to open a Way to that *old Constitution*, I was so passionately fond of, which could not be hoped for, in a Period of Peace and Tranquility. And for this Reason, tho' I was not at liberty to oppose the Convention directly, I took Care that my Justification of it, should rather inflame than abate the Feuds

I apprehended we should be unsuccessful
ours

and Heats, both within Doors and without. Infomuch, that I may say I had contributed as much to the *Spanish War*, by my manner of opposing it, as those that had openly recommended it. Nor did this Subterfuge escape the Penetration of Sir *Robert*, who, more than once, upbraided me with my Address, (his soft Phrase) in Regard to the Convention.

I acted pretty near the like Part in my Abetment of the Court Scheme, for an Excise on Wine and Tobacco, a Scheme which was handed to the Minister with an Injunction from which there was no receding for one that would continue his Influence. I knew my Countrymen so well, that I was sure they would not only acquiesce in the Measure, if perfected; but forget, or at least forgive the Invaders of their Liberties. Therefore my Aim was to incense and inflame by a seeming Support of the Measure, but with no View to carrying the Scheme into Execution. The too great additional Power it would give the Crown, was my principal Objection to it, but not as it might endanger the Liberties of the People, so much as that it might obstruct their *Relief*, which I ever had in my View, and uppermost in my Thoughts.

The future *Relief* of the Community, the Happiness of my Country, and of my
— Prince,

— Prince, were the constant Objects of my Attention, and the Motives of my Conduct. And tho' I won't assert that Sir Robert was as warmly zealous in this Principle as I, yet I will do his Memory the Justice, to say, that I verily believe his Scheme of Peace was founded on a Supposition, that War would rather retard than accelerate the Completion of our general Scheme. He had no Opinion of either the Honour, Piety or Friendship of *France*, nor was he better reconciled to the Virtue of his Countrymen, whom he believed might be driven by Necessity, but not reasoned, into Conpunction for the horrid *Crime* of their Fathers.

He often complained to me, that my Party, as he was wont to call those I had quitted, did not seem to discern the Drift of his Conduct, but associated with his Enemies to obstruct his Measures, in Favour of the *old Constitution*; constantly adding 'their new Friends will deceive them, and the P—e likewise, if ever he confides in them, or they force themselves into Power; for the Chiefs of them have imbibed the Leven of *Forty-one*, and will change, but not restore the Constitution, whenever they can make the vicious Stride, with any Hopes of succeeding.'

Herein

Herein I dissented from the Minister, on a Supposition that the Scheme of a Commonwealth, which I knew to be that of his Opponents and many of his Abettors, would rather forward than impede the Completion of my healing Scheme. The Republicans might unhinge the present — but even that might be but paving the Way. Therefore, whether or no the Party I had left, saw things in the same Light I did, I was glad they associated with the Enemies of Monarchy. And I will assume the Glory of being of those that had contributed, to enlarging Lord G——'s Views, in Regard to the *old Constitution*. His Notions, like most others of the old Patriot Party, were narrow and confined solely to that of Resistance to Ministers. But I had the good Fortune to open his Views, and give his Politicks the proper Bias: And if it were possible that his own good Understanding would permit him to swerve from his present Maxims, the Alliance he had not long since contracted, with one of the Chiefs of the Levellers, would probably keep him steady.

Yet how have I heard that wise Patriot Nobleman traduced for a Conduct that should endear him to all who wish well to the *old Constitution*, and have the Good of Posterity at Heart? Shall not we arrive much sooner, and more certainly at the Port of our Happiness,

Happiness, by sailing rather with, than against the Current of Power? Let all who are fond of War, and Parades on the *Continent*, be indulged. Let all who would maintain a large standing Corps of cherished foreign Mercenaries, have their way. Let those who would increase our Debts, be pleased. And let those who would prolong the War, to increase these Pledges, and for a Pretext to continue the aforesaid Mercenaries in our Pay, be praised and supported. In short, let all who would impoverish the People, in order to humble them, and corrupt them, in order to efface all generous Notions of Posterity, and their Country out of their Breasts; let those, I say, have Rope enough, and they will better answer our Purposes than *France*, even if she were sincere, and inclined to serve us.

'Tis true, the People are volatile and unthinking; easily prejudiced against their real Friends and genuine Interest. The Pulpit and Press have had infinite Sway among them, and have often preached and wrote them out of their Wits, and from their Duty; and *pro tempore* from their Interest. But this has, in the Main, such hold of their Minds, that it will warpe them sooner or later, from their Errors and Prejudices. My Scheme therefore, has been to reduce them to such a State, as may open the Eyes of their Understanding, and shew them the Way to that
Redress,

redress, I have ever had in View, that Redress which every Patriot, considerate *Englishman* must necessarily have in View. Let this then be my Excuse for that Contrast, that Inequality, which may have appeared in my Conduct, and given offence to many well-meaning Persons* * * * *

* * * * * And let them who would be the War, to instigate the Judges, and let a Pretext to continue the absurd Misconduct in our Pay, be printed and supported. In short, let all who would impoverish the People, in order to humble them, and corrupt them, in order to destroy all generous Notions of Policy, multiply out of their Breasts; let them have Rope enough, and they will be better than our Purposes than France, even if she were sincere, and inclined to leave us.



* * * * * This true, the People are volatile and unthinking; easily prejudiced against their real Friends and Countrymen. The Pulpit and Press have had infinite ways among them, and have often preached and wrote them out of their Wits, and from their Duty; and give reasons from their Interest. But this is, in the Main, such hold of their Minds, that it will wipe them sooner or later, from their Errors and Prejudices. My Scheme, therefore, has been to reduce them to such a State, as may open the Eyes of their Understanding, and show them the Way to that Redress.

